

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 406

September 11, 1995, 5:21 p.m.
Page S-13196 Temp. Record

WELFARE REFORM BILL/\$11 Billion for Child Care

SUBJECT: Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 1995 . . . H.R. 4. Santorum motion to table the Dodd amendment No. 2560 to the Dole modified perfecting amendment No. 2280 to the committee substitute amendment.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 50-48

SYNOPSIS: As reported with a committee substitute amendment, H.R. 4, the Family Self-Sufficiency Act of 1995, will overhaul six of the Nation's ten largest welfare programs.

The Dole modified perfecting amendment would strike the provisions of the committee substitute amendment and insert in lieu thereof substitute provisions, entitled "The Work Opportunity Act of 1995."

The Dodd amendment would require \$11 billion in Federal child care funding over the next 5 years. It would fence \$1 billion each year of the funds to be provided for family assistance grants, plus it would provide an additional \$6 billion entitlement over 5 years for the States. All \$11 billion would be funneled through family assistance grants (leaving the Finance Committee with jurisdiction over the funding) though the money would have to be spent in accordance with Child Care Development Block Grant regulations. To receive any of the \$6 billion in new entitlement funding, a State would have to maintain its spending on child care at its FY 1994 level. Grants would be used to pay for child care for children under the age of 13 who lived with a parent or parents who were on welfare and who were working, receiving job training, or in educational programs, or who were "at risk of falling into welfare." The Dodd amendment would also forbid penalizing or sanctioning a parent with a preschool-age child for failing to participate in a job training, educational, or work program if child care assistance were not provided, and it would forbid penalizing or sanctioning a parent of an elementary-school-age child for failure to participate in such a program before or after normal school hours if an appropriate before- or after-care school program were not provided. Finally, the Dodd amendment would express the sense of the Senate that the cost of the new spending in this amendment should be offset "by corresponding reductions in corporate welfare." (Family assistance block grants would be created by the Dole amendment; they would replace all current Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) programs (AFDC Cash Assistance; AFDC Administration; Emergency Assistance; JOBS Program; and AFDC child care programs); the Dole amendment would provide States block grant funding for the next 5 years at these

(See other side)

YEAS (50)		NAYS (48)		NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (50 or 96%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (2 or 4%)	Democrats (46 or 100%)	Republicans (2)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchison	Campbell	Akaka	Inouye	Gramm- ² Simpson- ^{2AY}
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Jeffords	Baucus	Johnston	
Bennett	Kassebaum		Biden	Kennedy	
Bond	Kempthorne		Bingaman	Kerrey	
Brown	Kyl		Boxer	Kerry	
Burns	Lott		Bradley	Kohl	
Chafee	Lugar		Breaux	Lautenberg	
Coats	Mack		Bryan	Leahy	
Cochran	McCain		Bumpers	Levin	
Cohen	McConnell		Byrd	Lieberman	
Coverdell	Murkowski		Conrad	Mikulski	
Craig	Nickles		Daschle	Moseley-Braun	
D'Amato	Packwood		Dodd	Moynihan	
DeWine	Pressler		Dorgan	Murray	
Dole	Roth		Exon	Nunn	
Domenici	Santorum		Feingold	Pell	
Faircloth	Shelby		Feinstein	Pryor	
Frist	Smith		Ford	Reid	
Gorton	Snowe		Glenn	Robb	
Grams	Specter		Graham	Rockefeller	
Grassley	Stevens		Harkin	Sarbanes	
Gregg	Thomas		Heflin	Simon	
Hatch	Thompson		Hollings	Wellstone	
Hatfield	Thurmond				
Helms	Warner				

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

programs' FY 1994 funding level).

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Santorum moved to table the Dodd amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

The Dodd amendment would take a gigantic step in the wrong direction. We understand and applaud our colleagues' motivation, but we must adamantly oppose their amendment because it would have disastrous consequences. Our colleagues are correct that having reliable, affordable child care is extremely important because having such care makes it possible for welfare recipients to enter the workforce. Their solution, though, is to provide a 100 percent Federal guarantee that Uncle Sam will therefore jump into the breach and provide that child care. The Federal Government should not be the first resort--it should be the last resort when all else has failed. Our colleagues are asking us to replace one Federal dependency with another.

In the traditional nuclear family, the father has had the primary responsibility for providing income (among other roles), and the mother has had the primary responsibility for caring for children. For most welfare families, which consist of mothers and their children, the father's income role has been assumed by the Federal Government--Uncle Sam has become Daddy Sam. Statistically, for most women from broken marriages, this situation is temporary. Such women enroll on welfare when their marriages end, but they typically get back on their feet within 2 years. For women who have illegitimate children, though, the situation is different. They remain on welfare for far greater periods. These women are able to stay on welfare because they have an "entitlement" to funding.

The challenge, as we see it, is not simply to get these women into the workforce. The more important goal is to wean them from government dependency. The Dodd amendment would fail in this regard. Though it would not provide an individual entitlement in letter, it would provide such an entitlement in effect, because it would entitle States to the full amount of money that HHS has estimated would be necessary to guarantee Federal child care funding for welfare parents entering the workforce as a result of the Dole amendment's requirements. Each year funding would increase, and States would be required to maintain their current level of child care funding. At the end of 5 years, the Federal Government would be providing nearly \$5 billion through this welfare program alone for child care (other funds would also still be presumably flowing through other Federal programs). Though the amendment would not provide funding past 5 years, it is clearly intended that it would continue indefinitely. Our colleagues certainly do not intend to build up a \$5 billion dependency and then cut off the funding instantly the next year. The amendment would not set any time limits--eligibility would be forever as long as one had a low income. Two-parent families in which both spouses worked would be eligible for the free child care as well, but we all know logically that such families would comprise a small minority of enrollees. The misguided premise of the Dodd amendment is that if the United States is no longer going to fulfill the father's traditional "bread-winner" role, then it has to assume the costs of the traditional child-rearing role. Our colleagues think that Daddy Sam has to become Mommy Samantha before we can expect welfare mothers to get jobs. They want us to endorse replacing one form of dependency with another by increasing spending, and, as usual, by retaining control over that new spending in Washington.

We oppose creating a new form of dependency; we oppose increasing spending; we oppose retaining Federal control. As we said at the outset, child care is undoubtedly needed if we are going to expect welfare mothers to gain employment. Most working families in America, whether headed by one or two parents, have to struggle with day care problems. Most of these families are succeeding by various means without Federal aid. Welfare mothers entering the workforce should also be expected to fend for themselves, if not initially, at least eventually. Transitional day care assistance we agree may be beneficial, but such assistance should not become a permanent right.

Another offensive aspect of the Dodd amendment is the assumption that to provide \$11 billion in funding an additional \$6 billion in spending must be added to this bill. We believe that if States think that \$11 billion is really needed then they can budget for it from the amount provided. In discussing the drastic "cuts" in welfare spending that the Dole amendment would make, Senators should keep in mind that the "cuts" are in the projected rate of increase in total welfare spending. When all welfare programs are counted, instead of letting their spending grow by 77 percent over the next 7 years, the Dole amendment would "only" let their spending grow by 70 percent.

The Nation's Governors agree that the Dole amendment would provide sufficient funding. Our colleagues would do well to listen to these Governors because, unlike Congress, they have had some success in recent years in reducing welfare rolls with innovative programs. Of the 30 Republican Governors in the United States, 29 have endorsed the Dole substitute amendment. They believe that it would give them the flexibility they need to reform welfare. These Governors have within their States fully 80 percent of all welfare recipients. They know that the Dole amendment already has flexible work requirements that would allow them to exempt those women who were unable to find child care; they know that the Dole amendment would give them the freedom to innovate and copy other States' successes; they know that the Dole amendment would free them from Federal regulations. The last thing that the Governors of America representing 80 percent of all welfare recipients want is a new Federal entitlement program run out of Washington D.C. that will create a new form of dependency. The Dodd amendment is well intentioned, but it would be utterly disastrous; we therefore urge our colleagues to vote against it.

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Those opposing the amendment contended:

The common goal of every Senator is to end welfare as we know it. Welfare should provide only a temporary helping hand, not a permanent way of life. Our disagreements on this bill are only on how to achieve an end to welfare dependency. The Dodd amendment addresses one major area of disagreement--child care. The Dole amendment simply would not provide adequate funding, and as a result its efforts to move people off of welfare and into the workforce would be seriously crippled. The Dodd amendment would rectify this error by adding the needed funding and by requiring the States to continue their own funding efforts. This extra spending could be easily offset by cutting obsolete, unjustifiable tax loopholes for rich corporations.

Under the Dole amendment, AFDC child care funding would be lumped in with all other AFDC funding as part of the new family assistance block grants. States could spend their grants on child care, or they could spend them on other initiatives at their discretion. Funding would be at the FY 1994 level for the next 5 years. If States chose to spend as much as the Federal Government gave them to spend in FY 1994, then Federal spending on child care through this new block grant would be about \$1 billion per year for each of the next 5 years. According to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), this amount would not be enough. An additional \$6 billion would be needed. This much higher level of funding would be required for an obvious reason: if welfare mothers are going to be required to work, then they are going to need someone to take care of their children while they work. They cannot leave young children home alone; doing so would constitute neglect. When they first start work, or are still in job training or educational programs, they will not have enough money to pay for daycare.

Under the Dole amendment, States that failed to have a certain percentage of their welfare recipients in the workforce would be penalized by 10 percent. However, a 10-percent penalty for each State would be less than the cost of paying for child care so that the work requirement could be met. Therefore, we expect that most States would simply opt to take the 10-percent penalty. As the Dole amendment has been modified, it is likely that many States would be able to avoid both the work requirement and the penalty. The modification would allow a State to exempt parents with children age 5 or under from its work-percentage calculations if those parents could show that they were unable to find affordable child care. We imagine that many States would find that a large number of their non-working parents could not find affordable child care, because making such findings would make it more likely that they would have the requisite percentage of welfare recipients working, and they would therefore not be penalized.

In a way we would be pleased by this result. As originally proposed, the Dole amendment would have provided inadequate child care funding and would have likely resulted in penalties to further reduce welfare spending. With the modification, the penalties at least would be removed. However, in both cases, the main goal of moving welfare recipients into the workforce would be missed. The Dodd amendment, on the other hand, would realistically approach the need for child care by providing the full amount of money--\$11 billion--that has been estimated will be needed. That funding would have to be spent in full accordance with all of the requirements of the Child Care Development Block Grant program, as administered by HHS. Additionally, in order to receive funding, States would have to continue spending the same amount of money on child care for welfare recipients' children that they spent in FY 1994. Thus, in total, the Dodd amendment would guarantee that \$11 billion would be spent over the next 5 years on AFDC child care programs, plus it would result in States continuing their funding efforts. Unlike the Dole amendment, the Dodd amendment would succeed in getting welfare recipients into the workforce because it would make it possible for them to enter. Senators who truly want to end welfare should therefore join us in voting in favor of the Dodd amendment.